

Minutes of the 121st Annual General Meeting of The Japan Society

*Held at the Embassy of Japan, 101-104 Piccadilly, London W1
at 6.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 18 July 2018*

Sir David Warren

Sir David Warren, Chairman of the Japan Society, opened the meeting by welcoming members and to the AGM along with the Society's President, the Japanese Ambassador, Koji Tsuruoka. He thanked everyone for their continued support of the Society's work.

The Chairman invited Ambassador Tsuruoka to say a few words.

Ambassador Tsuruoka

Ambassador Tsuruoka thanked Sir David for the introduction and the Society for the work and support it has provided to the Embassy. He was also grateful for the supportive efforts of the Society and many others which helped further develop the relationship between Japan and the UK.

The Ambassador briefed the meeting on the upcoming Japan/UK Season of Culture—an agreement formed at the meeting last year when Prime Minister May visited Japan in August—which would take place from the Rugby World Cup next year to the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics. These were two important global events. In the UK the Season aimed to showcase Japan's multi-faceted appeal, from its culture and art to innovation and cutting-edge technology in areas such as medicine, science and industry. By building on various areas of grassroots exchange and local community activities that already exist, it was hoped to use the momentum of the Japan Season of Culture to create a legacy that would endure in its aftermath.

One such initiative which came under this umbrella was the Sakura Cherry Tree Planting Project in the UK, whereby cherry trees would be planted in a number of prominent locations, including some of the Royal Parks. The Japan Society was active in approaching schools where trees can be planted in this regard. Ambassador Tsuruoka spoke of his dream for British people to gather under the cherry trees when they blossom in the springtime, as people do in Japan, and to celebrate the beauty of the trees by engaging in hanami with the help of Japanese sake and sushi.

The Ambassador went on to describe the opening of Japan House on Kensington High Street, achieved also through the assistance of the Japan Society, and encouraged members to visit. He commented on his delight that such wonderful taste of Japan had resulted from a government funded project and assured everyone that it would be not a waste of time to visit Japan House.

To conclude, the Ambassador took the opportunity to thank the Chairman for his work in chairing the Japan Society. Sir David had been tireless in his efforts and would be a hard act to follow. However, he was confident that Bill Emmott would also serve the Society well.

In congratulating the Society on a successful year and thanking those involved for their stewardship, Ambassador reiterated his support and promised to maintain a keen involvement in its activities in the coming years.

Sir David Warren

The Chairman thanked the Ambassador for his kind words and for the unstinting support he and the Embassy had given the Society in support of its activities. He and the Society were very grateful for this. He felt privileged to have the opportunity to lead the Society in the past five and a half years. He happily announced that Bill Emmott would be standing for election as Chairman, having been approached to do so following wide consultation and selection by the nominations committee.

Mr Emmott, a long standing supporter and member of the Society, was a former Editor-in-Chief of *The Economist* and its correspondent in Japan for a period of time. He was also a distinguished writer and commentator who had written several books on Japan. Sir David was delighted that Mr Emmott had accepted the Society's invitation to stand for election as the new Chairman.

Sir David also announced that it was proposed to create a slightly more formal deputy chair position. Thus among the three new board members being proposed to the meeting, Martin Hatfull, who had formerly been former Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy in Tokyo before becoming Ambassador to Indonesia, had put his name forward for election to the board. It was the intention that he should serve as Bill Emmott's deputy chair. In addition, three existing members of the board would be standing for re-election: Janet Hunter, Jason James, and Eiji Wakiwaka. There were also two new candidates to join the Board: Tim Harding and Julie Rogers. The Japan Society was fortunate to have excellent and dedicated trustees with a broad range of skills, and representing both the Japanese and British communities. It was important to the Society that the members of the board came from a wide range of backgrounds including the academic, business (Japanese and non-Japanese) worlds, as well as the public and private sector.

The Chairman shared a few parting thoughts at this, his last AGM as Chairman. He highlighted the wide range of activities undertaken by the Japan Society in business and education and its mission to explain, educate, and enthuse people about Japan and the relationship between our two countries. The Society also attached importance to its role as a platform for debate and discussion; we had welcomed a number of distinguished speakers who had enabled us to focus discussions on issues facing the UK and Japan.

The Ambassador had mentioned Japan House, which was indeed a significant development. Sir David noted that it was a beautifully curated centre for Japanese culture and potential a platform for Japanese art, performance, and discussions. The Society's first event would take place on 6 September. It was a great achievement which the Society was proud to be supporting. David expressed his hopes for its continued success.

The Chairman also briefed the meeting on the topic of the library, on which as the Trustees Annual Report noted, work continued to catalogue and document its contents. Although there were occasional visitors and researchers, the future of the library was an issue which his successor and the board would need to consider. The Society lacked resources and space to run the library as a lending library. Much, but not all, of the library was of important historical value, and there were questions which the board and new chairman would need to consider. The board had already had some preliminary discussions on the subject.

In conclusion, David commented that the Japan Society had a unique position in the UK – Japan community, being the only organisation with a relatively equal number of Japanese and non-Japanese members; through the range of its activity it served a wide range of ages in its audience, as well as many different sectors of Society. We needed to keep the Society to the forefront of people's minds. David expressed his gratitude towards the companies and

individuals, from whom over two-thirds of the Society's income came, particularly in the current uncertain times. He also thanked all those who gave their time to the Society voluntarily, including Board members and volunteers for school programmes and special events. The formal AGM would be followed by the launch of the Japan Society's latest publication *British Foreign Secretaries and Japan 1850-1990* edited by Sir Hugh and Antony Best, with tireless support of Paul Norbury. Members had also been given copies of the latest issue of the Japan Society Proceedings, edited by Ryan Keeble, with Alejandra Armendariz-Hernandez, whom David also thanked.

Ambassador had mentioned the upcoming events: Season of Culture, Rugby World Cup, and Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics. The Chairman hoped the Society would be at the centre of this activity in the years ahead and reminded all that to do so it was crucial to maintain, and if possible increase, the level of support it received. As shown in the Accounts, the Society had made a small loss in the last year. This was partly because a number of donors had, for understandable reasons, drifted away. Though the Society had some reserves, we could not rely on this forever. Uppermost in the minds of those on the board was the question of how the Society could sustain the level of interest and support on which it depends.

Finally, Sir David thanked Heidi and everyone at the Japan Society office for their hard work during the year to keep the Society going with its exciting, innovating, and admirable activities.

Agenda Items

The Chairman gave a brief reminder of AGM vote and the board and trustee structure and tenure. In addition to the Chairman, who had completed a full six year term, three other board members were standing down at the meeting, or had done so during the year, at end of a full term in office, or on taking up overseas postings: Graham Holman, Mami Mizutori, Richard Oppenheim. He thanked them for their enthusiastic support of the Society's activities and contribution to the board.

Six candidates were standing for re-election/election as ordinary trustees: Tim Harding, Martin Hatfull, Janet Hunter (re-election), Jason James (re-election), Julie Rogers, and Eiji Wakiwaka (re-election). Biographies for each candidate had been circulated in official AGM papers.

Election was taken by poll.

The following resolutions were passed:

1. To receive and adopt the audited annual accounts for the financial year ended 31 December 2017 and the Trustees' report.
2. To reappoint Richard Place Dobson as auditors and to authorize the Board to approve their remuneration as thought fit.
3. To elect Bill Emmott as Chairman of the Japan Society.
4. To elect Tim Harding as an ordinary trustee of the Japan Society.
5. To elect Martin Hatfull as an ordinary trustee of the Japan Society.
6. To re-appoint Janet Hunter as an ordinary trustee of the Japan Society.
7. To re-appoint Jason James as an ordinary trustee of the Japan Society.
8. To elect Julie Rogers as an ordinary trustee of the Japan Society.
9. To re-appoint Eiji Wakiwaka as an ordinary trustee of the Japan Society.